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**Vinylsqueegee.com: A community to enrich the landscape of music culture  
through an historical perspective**

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**Vinylsqueegee.com: A community to enrich the landscape of music culture  
through an historical perspective**

**by**

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**Report**

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## **Dedication**

This report is dedicated to the musicians that have created the music I am privileged to experience each day. Their art is a gift that became my life's passion.

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## **Abstract**

### **Vinylsqueegee.com: A community to enrich the landscape of music culture through an historical perspective**

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This report chronicles the process of investigating social theories and their relation to music experience in order to create a specific online community. The purpose of this community focuses on an historical perspective of music while facilitating the formation of varied knowledge-networks and relationship levels. Social theories are correlated with web applications and tools to support design choices that will appeal to users by providing opportunities for specific social functions. This research allows for an organized, detailed, and theoretical approach to the design of the online music community, Vinylsqueegee.com.

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## Introduction

Vinylsqueegee.com is an online music community that connects users through a common interest in the historical contexts of music culture. Users of the site can share their knowledge and exchange experiences through various discussion tools, curated content contributions, and by contributing their resources and knowledge to an online archive of music materials, media, and documents.

This report documents planning and design for the creation and sustainability of Vinylsqueegee.com as an online music knowledge-sharing community. The site works from a definition of *online community* provided by Ren, Kraut, and Kiesler (2007), derived from Preece; “We define an online community as an Internet-connected collective of people who interact over time around a shared purpose, interest, or need” (p. 378). The choice of using music as a subject and medium for this knowledge-sharing community is two-fold. The first reason is personal and has been demonstrated in the past academic research I have done on rock posters and venue history. Music is my passion and is reflected in my experiences as a music industry professional, fan, and musician. The second reason was prompted by the idea that music is a connector because most every culture creates its own type of music. John Blacking’s (1973) work in the book, *How Musical is Man?*, supports my overall philosophy about the value of music as a social connector:

Whether emphasis is on humanly organized sound or on soundly organized humanity, a tonal experience related to people or a shared experience related to tones, the function of music is to reinforce, or relate people more closely to, certain experiences which have come to have meaning in their social life. (Blacking, 1973, p. 99)

The report examines criteria and contextual issues necessary to create a unique and sustainable online knowledge-sharing music community. These are: 1- geography, 2- psychology, 3- social interaction, 4- music, 5- and my intended users who are: music enthusiasts, musicians, scholars, & professionals, 6- the desire to provide a community for the variety of intended users with a specific focus on the historical perspective of music culture.

Music is a cultural experience that bridges many dimensions. Physical space is one variable that has been the focus of almost every area of research in the social sciences, therefore creating a wealth of theories to apply to the creation of my specific online community. Physical place relates musical interaction to physical proximity and then extends those relationships to online interaction motivated by factors such as identity formation, the exchange of cultural capital, and social learning.

By combining these theories during the planning stage and directly correlating them with the functions and design choices of the proposed online community, I am equipped to create a community that appeals to users in a deep and meaningful way. The section on design choices clarifies the theory behind my design and readily available Internet tools that have been field-tested for usability and popularity over time.

By grounding design choices with social and psychological theories, planning for the design of VinylSqueegee.com supports the likelihood that it will engage its intended audience of music enthusiasts, scholars, musicians and industry professionals. With this research I intend to create a space that addresses the needs of this community while maintaining quality, sustainability, and staying true to the social nature of music. A simple diagram of the users, content types, and features of Vinylsqueegee.com is provided in Appendix D.

## 1. Literature Review

### SOUNDSCAPES

The Internet transcends physical geography by providing a constant space for interaction, collaboration, exploration, and entertainment. When thinking about the concept of “place” in relation to music one can associate the experience of a song, record, band, rock poster, etc. with the place it was heard, seen, or experienced most memorably. For music-lovers who attend live music events, their memory of a specific venue or physical place, in addition to a moment referenced in time, can be associated with the music heard at the time. In this way, music and the discussion of music over the Internet has the potential to transcend generational and geographic boundaries to connect people across time, space, and place.

In her article, *Soundscape*, Smith (1994) argues for the need to include music in geographical research in order to begin to understand cultural landscape (p. 235). According to Smith (1994), “if [sounds] are not recorded or written about, sounds may be lost as the contexts which generate them change, leaving analysts only to guess at the character and significance of past soundscapes” (p. 233). The importance of place connected to music and therefore, to cultural identity, is one that is well known among ethnomusicologists. Additionally Smith supports this importance stating, “the place of music- as a distinct type of sound- is so important to the cultural turn in human geography that it merits a research agenda of its own” (p.233).

An online music community can provide a “space” for the documentation of music’s cultural landscape by hosting an organized system or map where users can

contribute their knowledge and memories. A simple example is to create a momentum of contributions to a map of North America and ask users to mark or tag the venues they have visited and describe their favorite concert at this venue. From this beginning archive, users may be able to find others who attended the same shows they did, thus creating an identity bond or a common bond; a bond with a group or with an individual. By encouraging users to collectively document their experience of music geographically, other benefits surface. These benefits include the creation of community through a *subcultural identity* which bonds the users to a broader community of music fans, scholars, musicians and other experts. Benefits also accrue to the field of popular culture studies through the preservation of often institutionally unrecognized cultural media such as zines, ticket stubs, concert posters, and music merchandise. To situate the self within a cultural landscape, it is helpful to examine the development of self-identity and taste.

### **IDENTITY FORMATION & TASTE**

In her article, "Subcultural Identity in Alternative Music Culture," Holly Kruse refers to alternative music as a medium through which subcultural identity is formed. She states, "Indeed, as much as the word 'identification' seems to imply a sense of belonging, perhaps more it describes a process of differentiation...Senses of shared identity are alliances formed out of oppositional stances" (Kruse, 1993, p. 34). In the case of music, the formation of identity is most often researched in relation to taste. Bourdieu (2006) simplifies taste stating, "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier" (p. 324). In the setting of an online music community a user can form or validate an identity by comparing taste through a number of ways. The most basic way is to

compare the musical tastes of other users with their own. This can be accomplished by viewing community comments, searching for groups specific to a genre or band, and by engaging in opportunities to discuss their tastes.

When thinking about taste in relation to identity one must acknowledge the progression of concepts such as “culture industries” and the active and passive audience of the “Effects Model” theorized by Theodor Adorno and The Frankfurt School. Many scholars, such as Simon Frith, have critiqued the limitations of these theories when applied to the medium of popular music. Frith explains that the relationship between media and consumer is more complex than being a victim of the “culture industry” and that media is used in varying contexts for different reasons. Therefore, the significance of the “mass audience” as a classification of a consumer group merely validates that popular music creates multiple meanings (Frith, 1981, p. 41). These multiple meanings, regardless of the impact of a “culture industry,” are the result of various tastes formed by each individual as a part of self-identity. When examined further, there are specific psychological aspects of music that effect self-identity and therefore, the formation of interpersonal relationships.

### **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MUSIC: A SOCIAL DIMENSION**

Research related to the psychology of music provides important foundations for an analysis of the uses of music in every day life. Just as Smith argues for a re-examination of geography with respect to the importance of music in the cultural landscape, Hargreaves and North argue for a change to redefine and resituate the social aspect of music psychology. They provide three ways in which the social functions of

music are manifested: 1) self-identity, 2) interpersonal relationships, and 3) mood.  
(Hargreaves & North, 1999, p. 71)

In particular, research related to the study of self-identity and interpersonal relationships is especially applicable to the creation of an online music community. *Consumer* in this sense, references the consumption of music, not the exchange of monetary capital. When one chooses among the infinite musical options, “self-identity” is developed and tastes are formed. When these choices and identities are made visible via an online community, the second function of Hargreaves and North is facilitated through the community platform and tools; this is the function of “interpersonal relationships”. These “interpersonal relationships” can build upon common tastes of community members and can stimulate discussion.

Smith and Kruse both emphasize the important of place in relation to soundscapes and scenes. The gathering of fans often helps to create music scenes. Hargreaves and North relate the social dimension of experiencing live music to a psychological motivation stating,

Given the availability of high-quality recordings, it is perhaps surprising that people should go to the trouble of attending concerts at all: the fact that they do, and in such numbers, indicates that there are likely to be many social psychological reasons for attendance (Hargreaves & North, 1999, p. 78).

The same is true for the possible motivations of joining an online music community. When thinking about these motivations “self-identity” and “interpersonal-relationships” are formed and the social psychological theories of common identity and common bond theory become instrumental to the design of the online community. These theories and their application to online behaviors are briefly outlined in the next section.



## **COMMON IDENTITY AND COMMON BOND THEORY FOR STRATEGIC DESIGN**

Sociological theories related to the way that common identity and common bonds build upon each other also relate to the unique and sustainable design of an online music community.

The basic difference between common identity and common bond theory can be described as: 1) “becoming attached to the community as a whole”, and 2) “becoming attached to individual members” (Ren, Kraut & Kiesler, 2007, p. 378). Granovetter’s concentration of network theory and the “Strength of Weak Ties” (1983) compliments these theories. Granovetter (1983) uses the example of the social structure of “acquaintances” and “densely knit clumps of close friends” to explain that weak ties between close friends are made through the role of acquaintances (p. 202). He further examines this social structure to conclude that the greater number of weak ties a group has, the richer and more coherent the information exchanged among the group will be. He explains one of the reasons for this conclusion is that, “Acquaintances, as compared to close friends, are more prone to move in different circles than oneself” (Granovetter, 1983, p. 205).

When theories of weak ties in social structures are connected to the aforementioned geographic proximity of musical experiences, VinylSqueegee.com has broad potential to create common bonds, or identity bonds, for its users. For example, in one scenario related to the potential use of VinylSqueegee.com, someone finds a venue at which they attended a concert on the community’s “map of collective concert history” I proposed earlier. When looking at this specific venue the user sees that another member uploaded a ticket stub from the same exact concert, thus creating a commonality. In this

way, the “map of collective concert history” can create the following scenarios; 1) The user sees a common experience and recognizes the community as a place where they “belong” (self-identity or common identity), 2) A decision is made to contact the user who uploaded the ticket stub to discuss the specific music experience (interpersonal-relationships or common bond), and 3) The user develops a sense of cultural/subcultural identity relative to the genre/band/style of performance, the geographic location, or to the artifacts visually represented as part of this music event.

These artifacts can include ticket stubs, concert posters, and musical merchandise that can then become visual indicators of culture and nostalgic memory triggers. An example of a visual indicator would be a concert poster created by an artist that was living close to the venue at the time of the event. This combination of music and visual culture examples that are organized for and by the community can be extended with related links acting as “weak ties” to the communities beyond the website.

Examples of these outside communities are: museums, library archives, historical music landmarks, and genre specific online communities.

## 2. Design Choices

### LOGIN AND PASSWORD, PERSONAL PROFILE PAGES

A key design choice that begins with the homepage is whether to require a login and password. This choice can determine the size of the community and the motivations for joining the group. The requirement of a login and password usually follows a user profile. Ren, Kraut, & Keisler (2007) state that, “members of online communities are more likely to form relationships if they have opportunities to self-disclose and learn about each other” (p. 388). In this regard a profile page requirement would enhance the opportunity to form relationships and common bonds. Psychologically, the motivation for creating a personal profile page that includes identifiers, including tastes, satisfies Hargreaves and North’s first two social functions of music; the creation of *self-identity* and *interpersonal relationships*. They explain that, “Conformity and prestige effects in musical preference judgments reflect a desire for acceptance into particular social groups” (Hargreaves & North, 1999, p. 79). This implies that by listing a band in a profile page, there is a possibility to be accepted or rejected into larger groups of a genre or subculture depending on the classifier of taste.

In past research of pedagogical methods of music education, Miikka Salavuo (2008) conducted a study designed to bridge formal and informal fields through the “Musical Futures Project” and found that users felt the social dimension could be stronger with the inclusion of personal profile pages similar to Facebook and MySpace (p. 126).

Revisiting the idea of taste, in her article “Social Network Profiles as Taste Performances,” Lui (2008) examines social network profiles of MySpace. She concluded that, “lists of interests might actually be more useful as an indicator of one’s aesthetics than as a factual declaration of interests” (p. 273). This is important to understanding subcultural identity associated with music cultures because many musical genres, especially with the accessibility the Internet provides, are no longer tied to a particular socioeconomic class, race, or gender. This, however, does not negate the associations of these areas in relation to the producer of these musical genres. Therefore, one’s aesthetics may rise from the experience of music with or without knowledge of its production origins or cultural context, thus being displayed in an eclectic manner on a profile page.

The requirement of a profile page is a design choice that is influenced by the growing number of online identities that Internet users currently manage through various social networks. Other design choices, besides detailed profile pages, can facilitate the possibility of common identity and common bond creation. A compromise to a detailed profile page is to limit profile requirements. This could force users to display the most pertinent information or none at all. Another idea is to create limited categories of classification that define the user’s intended interactions and purposes for joining the site. For example, if a user wants to join the community as a “read-only” reference, this user can choose to classify themselves as “lurkers” or “learners”. For those interested in presenting information, such as a university professor or music museum staff member, their profile page may state their institutional affiliation. This would allow “learners” to approach these scholars and staff members who want to offer their status and possibly their expertise, knowledge, or music experiences to other users. By classifying oneself

as a “learner/lurker” it is demonstrated that your interest in the community could be learning through observation or that being part of the community is important to you in some way. In contrast, a non-institutional scholar can classify themselves as a “scholar” or expert on the history of a specific band, genre, or medium such as 8-tracks or cassettes. During discussions and article submissions, the validity of this type of self-classification will be tested by the participation of members and the comparison of contributed cultural capital.

By providing the choice of how each user can present themselves to the rest of the community, users can grow, learn, and cultivate their identities through their online exchange and membership while contributing to the content and archives of the community. The web application, Disqus, displays the profile information for each user as shown in *Figure 1*. This example is a “limited profile” in terms of detail and simply directs other users toward existing profiles and other ways to contact the user. This is if an only if, the user chooses to provide this information. The potential for common identity formation is present when users look at this simple profile page and see other networks and communities that welcome their participation. Disqus is a program that makes integration of this information easier for administrators and is compatible with WordPress, the current technical platform for Vinylsqueegee.com.

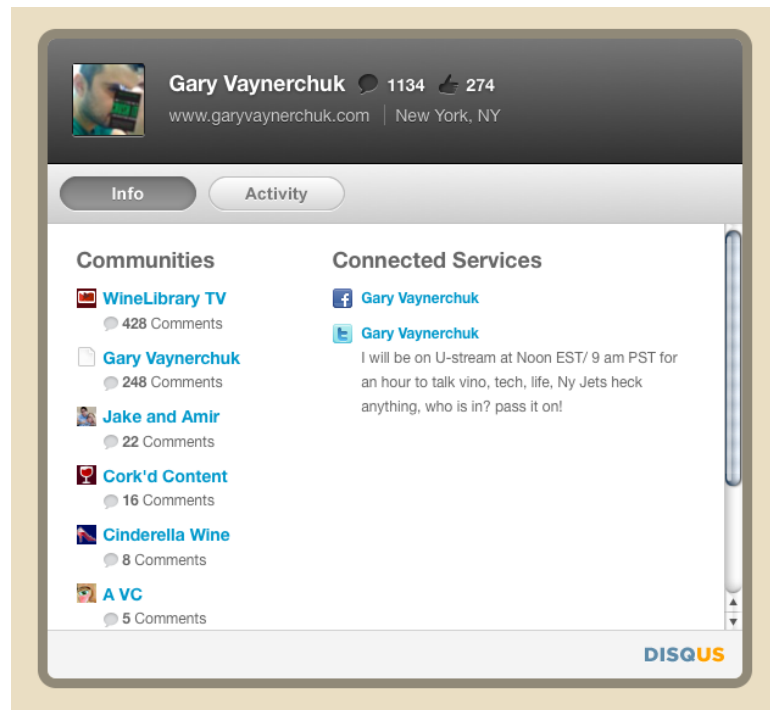


Figure 1: Disqus, Profile Example, [www.disqus.com/features](http://www.disqus.com/features), accessed Nov 28, 2010

The profile page in *Figure 1* tabulates the approved comments with the “thumbs up” symbol at the top right and to the left displays the total number of comments this user has posted. It then lists other communities this user is part of, their connectivity and use of social networks, and this person has included his location and website.

## SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Synchronous and Asynchronous communication in the form of chat tools are a possible alternative or compliment to profile pages. Both allow for self-disclosure, which can strengthen self-identity or common identity among users. Users most likely have practice in both types of communication through methods such as postal mail, email,

website chat tools, and in-person discussions. In order to facilitate community participation Vinylsqueegee.com will provide ways for users to communicate on and off-line through synchronous and asynchronous communication tools described in the following sections.

### **SYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION**

Synchronous communication for the purposes of Vinylsqueegee.com is when more than one user communicates with other user(s) in real time. This can be done through various instant-messaging tools such as AIM, Yahoo Messenger, Gmail Chat, ICQ, and Skype. By giving the user the choice to list as many instant messenger names as wanted or none at all, the choice for how much communication they prefer, is provided. VinylSqueegee.com is designed to build trust in the community by providing flexibility in the users' preferred degree of communication and anonymity. This specific tool can create both common identity and common bonds between users on several levels. The first is the simple recognition and identification of chat tools that can classify a user and other users. Just as with any other brand, chat tools have a reputation, stigma, or user-associated feeling towards their use. These preferences have developed at such a detailed level because chat tools have existed and been used by a mass of users for many years. Users of newer chat tools such as Gmail chat might revert to older chat tools like AIM because their Gmail chat includes more information than an AIM screen name. Conversely, an ICQ user may identify with another ICQ user because they recognize that ICQ is a more anonymous chat service where users are assigned numbers. Both users may classify each other as a pioneer of chatting online because of

ICQ was developed in 1996 as one of the first peer-to-peer communication applications. (<http://www.icq.com/info/icqstory.html>, accessed Nov 20, 2010)

Secondly, common identity and common bonds can be formed through instant messaging services when users contact other users based upon other information offered within by a profile, screen name, or participation in commenting on content. When a user decides to contact another based upon a screen name such as, Minutemenfan#1, a taste classifier forms a common identity and the potential for a common bond is enabled by the chat function. Another example of common bond formation is as follows; 1) User 1 comments after an article or video about the Minutemen including specific editing work they performed for the production of the documentary, *We Jam Econo*, 2) As a super fan of the Minutemen, User 2 decides to visit User 1's profile page seeking ways of contacting User 2 aside from the view of all users to read in the comments section. It is my hope that User 1 finds comfort in the fact that their work is appreciated and is willing to communicate with User 2 via chat tools. If User 1 decides they do not want to communicate with User 2, they can simply block the other user or turn off their chat functions as if they are "off-line," while still experiencing site content. The choice lies with either user to form these bonds and the chat tools are provided to facilitate these social relationships.

Finally, instant messaging can provide a group chat function that allows for a common identity to form. For example, a user opens a group chat invitation for anyone wanting to discuss the musicians, Les Paul and Mary Ford. During this group chat a number of interactions and classifications can happen; 1) The users initially participating in the group chat can form a common identity as fans of these artists, 2) users can classify others based upon their presented knowledge of the subject during the



discussion, and 3) based upon the contribution of each user to the group chat, two users may form a common bond and leave the group to discuss their specific

Whether chatting as two users or as a group, the chat function enhances the opportunity to form interpersonal relationships, as well as, an opportunity to develop self-identity through comparison of experience and preferences against others, therefore fulfilling the social functions of music presented by Hargreaves and North.

### **ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION**

Asynchronous communication in this case would be achieved if a user posts on a Forum or provides an email address within a profile page for future contact. The requirement of a membership profile to view site content could curtail spam abuse and protect users who choose to display an email address. It is also possible that users prefer logins, passwords, and profile pages to make the process of membership confusing to spam programs, thus improving the quality of membership experience.

Forums have been used as a tool that created some of the first of online communities. When participating in a forum one must be patient as each post takes time to appear in the thread. For some, this time allowed and expected can provide for a more organized and developed contribution. For others, waiting for a comment that may or may not be related to their own is less appealing. For “lurkers” or in my categorization, “learners”, reading forum comments and threads can assist in observational learning because questions posted in forums are usually answered quickly and with several answers or options. For example, User 1 posts a question in the forum labeled, “Bass Amps”, asking about how bass amps process such low frequencies. Other users who do

not know the answer may become interested by chance of seeing the post and may also begin to wait for the answer. Users who know the answer, such as a music industry professional who makes bass amps, can answer this question if desired and provide a link to their company products. By providing an answer that is detailed and technical, the user is able to support the quality of their product and exchange cultural capital. In addition to the response posted by the amp producer, a music scholar who has written about the registration of the human ear in relation to the electrical processing of amps can post a link to their work or website. A moderator can remove or flag comments that are off topic in order to keep the discussion consistent.

An advantage of asynchronous communication through forums is that the knowledge is shared potentially with all users. Disadvantages of communication in forums include the problem of information getting buried within posts, that users may not be willing to “dig” through, and the topic straying from the origin of the thread. Most forums communities have a section for off-topic threads so that specific threads remain focused. After evaluating the behavioral outcomes of two studies Ren, Kraut and Kielser conclude “that online community members who feel bond-based attachment to the community will be more likely to engage in off-topic discussion and will be more tolerant of off-topic discussion than people who feel identity-based attachment to the community” (Ren, Kraut & Kielser, 2007, p. 389). In the function of an online forum this research finding directs the design choices to include places for off-topic discussion such as MeetUp.org, where users meet off-line. Table 1: *Synchronous and Asynchronous Tools*, outlines the functions of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in relation to the theories presented throughout this report.

Type of Communication	Website Tool Function	Related Theory	Community Benefits
Synchronous Communication	<b>Wibiya Bar:</b> contains options for “Website Chat” open to all users, social bookmarking/sharing, and “Social Chat” for private instant messaging	Common Identity and Common Bond	Interpersonal relationships, community involvement, exchange of cultural capital, choice of self-disclosure in participation, multiple network integration
Asynchronous Communication	<b>Forums</b>	Common Identity and Common Bond, Self-Identity (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Identity formation through forum posts and viewing of forums, self-disclosure, exchange of cultural capital, potential for interpersonal relationships
Asynchronous Communication	<b>Disqus:</b> Comment options, membership with other networks via profile, display of community activity, social bookmarking and distribution	Common Identity and Common Bond, Self-Identity (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Cultural networking, identity formation among community, active users displayed, self-disclosure choices, exchange of cultural capital through comments/posts, taste classifiers through participation and social distribution

Table 1: *Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication Tools*

## GEOGRAPHIC VISUALIZATION TOOLS

In her article “Soundscape,” Smith argues for the attention to music within cultural landscape (1994). She references Kruse’s work on the formation of subcultural identity in alternative music culture. Kruse herself concluded in her 1993 work that, “An ethnographic, or micro-sociological, analysis of music scenes allows us to get a sense of the plurality of practices that help constitute the identities of those involved” (Kruse, 1993, p. 39). Based on theories of location and its important to the study of culture through music, the inclusion of geographic visualization is a logical design choice for VinylSqueegee.com.

A geographic visualizer, which I call a “map of collective concert history,” would be a place where digital image files, collective memories, individual experiences, and links to other sources could be provided in association with a venue or concert. Smith (1994) suggests that by encouraging local music, identity and production of a distinct “sound” is attached to a scene or place. She further states, “Local live music may, then, be an effective form of resistance to the homogenizing forces of the culture industry, not necessarily by producing an alternative sound, but by enabling people to experience music in distinctive localized ways” (Smith, 1994, p. 237). This demonstrates the importance of local music as a factor in self-identity as a participant of the local scene, but also through the taste classifiers associated with listening to specific local music styles, regardless of geographical location. In order to identify with a specific sound from a specific scene, the scene must produce the sound and create the subcultural identity. While some scenes do not have a physical location such as, remix culture, the physical location of its participants can be geographically noted and identified with a searchable tag or symbol so that participants can look for each other on the map. The location of a user would be provided at their sole discretion and would not include specifics such as address. A safety feature could be to require membership or premium membership to view these details.

Other ideas for use of this visualization map could be for travel suggestions to visit musical monuments, museums, or even the graves of their favorite historical icons. Another idea for use could be as a register for all the record stores that are members of the Independent Record Store Coalition, as well as, the headquarters for different music organizations and non-profits. As these documents, listings, and recommendations are

visualized geographically, users can understand their physical proximity to certain places and also explore the resources provided without the expense of travel.

A geographic visualizer could benefit music tourism, promotion of music non-profits, and the creation of a digital multi-media historical archive. Table 2: *PostMapper Functions*, is an example of an existing application and its benefits to the user experience, as well as, the community's digital archive.

Geographic Visualizer	Website Tool Function	Related Theory	Community Benefits
<b>Post Mapper</b>	Allows users to attach posts, links, videos, photos, etc. to a location on a world map.	Music Venues and events as part of "Cultural Landscape", Common Identity and Common Bond, Self-identity (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Interpersonal relationships, community involvement, exchange of cultural capital, choice of self-disclosure in participation, multiple network integration, Self-identity through location or through content associated with attached content, production and organization of online popular culture artifacts through digital uploads

Table 2: *PostMapper Functions*

## DISTRIBUTION AND NETWORKS OF SOCIAL BOOKMARKING TOOLS

Social bookmarking tools are referenced throughout the literature as a way for users to "display their creative work, their expertise, and create networked relationships based upon them" (Salavuo, 2008, p.127). This definition supports Granovetter's network theory of the strength of weak ties. One possible dichotomy that may arise when using social bookmarking in an online community is that the

type of users are not of the same educational, social, or musical background, and therefore, will engage in taxonomy and folksonomy. Everhart and Shelton (2010) explain the difference in their research that supports social bookmarking as a pedagogical strategy stating, "The differences between taxonomies and folksonomies are tied to the level of professionals that produce them and the level of control in their production and dissemination" (p. 169). They go further to say that students who practice social bookmarking using formal taxonomy will develop effective skills in order to contribute to folksonomies in future practice, therefore expanding their expertise and field of disciplinary knowledge (Everhart & Shelton, 2010, p. 170).

While Vinylsqueegee.com may not be classified as an e-learning site, it is nonetheless an online community that can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources associated with a learning environment. In the event that students and former students of higher learning institutions use the community to gain additional knowledge outside of class, they may also contribute a more formal version of taxonomy. Conversely, the general music enthusiast may use a folksonomy that includes jargon or slang not found in an institutional setting. Additionally, there is a possibility of cross-pollination of users who begin to adopt each other's taxonomies and folksonomies because they feel each other's "tags" are more accurate.

Social bookmarking or "tagging" has benefits for the community as a whole and to individual users. Gene Smith (2008) provides "Five Motivations for Tagging," in his book titled *Tagging: People-Powered Metadata for the Social Web* that include, "ease of use, managing personal information, expressing yourself, having fun, and collaborating and sharing" (p. 27). The motivation to tag in order to "collaborate and

share” can be related to common identity and common bond theory in the sense that one might use a certain tag because it seems to be used by the majority of the group. Further one might choose to use the same tags that an individual uses because of a common bond.

While the term “social bookmarking” implies that you have marked a page for others to see, it is performed through the sharing of links. These links direct others to content and information over a variety of networks that the user may be closely tied to or with which they have “weak ties”. In this way, social bookmarking allows users to create different levels of ties over an infinite amount of networks, ultimately increasing variety of information exposure.

When applying the idea of social bookmarking or “tagging” to the learning process, the work of Salomon and Perkins (1998) is especially helpful. They examine the role of tools in their article, “The Individual and Social Aspects of Learning,” stating, “Tools characteristically play a double role: as a means to act upon the world and as cognitive scaffolds that facilitate such action. Some tools not only enrich one’s cognition but actually transform it” (p. 11). For example, when members use social bookmarking and “tagging” as a tool to share information with others they can “act upon the world” by sharing their tastes, knowledge, and self-identity. This tool can be applied to the individual learning of the user when they decide to tag or share content. The social aspects of learning within a social system are clear in this instance when others benefit from the community’s use of tags. Therefore, social bookmarking as a popular Internet tool, can facilitate the proximity of ideas and information regardless of having a common identity, common bond, or being a

member of Granovetter's "acquaintance" or "close friend" group because it will be available for all to use on VinylSqueegee.com.

## ALTERNATIVE DESIGN IDEAS

### Social Customization with Wibiya

With experienced users and the variety of choice in online community membership, it is important to consider the ways that a site can differ from existing communities. *Figure 2* displays a visual snapshot of the tools included in the Wibiya bar that appeal to the ease of managing an online community but also relate to theories researched during the planning stage.

The Wibiya toolbar is a valuable and adaptable tool for website customization. This tool allows for a variety of applications to be plugged into a specific bar that is then made available to the user when visiting your website. It has a range of customization options for a site administrator to choose from such as buttons for Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Digg, etc.

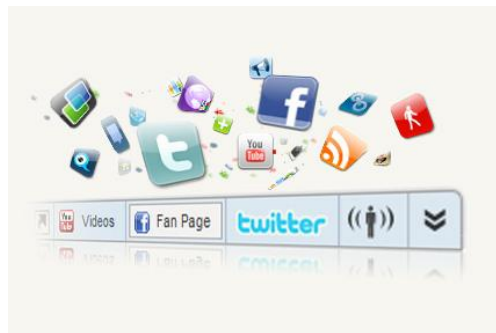


Figure 2: Wibiya Web Toolbar, [www.wibiya.com](http://www.wibiya.com), accessed Nov 27, 2010



In addition to social bookmarking buttons, the Wibiya toolbar has a tool called “Notifier Pro” that could strengthen the common identity of users of the VinylSqueegee.com community. This function allows the administrator to tailor messages, ads, and links to appear to multiple users simultaneously. For example, a message can appear on pages with certain key words to appeal to users who spend most of their time in the section where there are academic articles or only information about the history of a particular band. A message can be scheduled to appear in different time zones to users who have visited a certain amount of pages. From a business perspective this tool is extremely useful in providing targeted advertising. For example, an advertisement for an equipment company such as Orange Amps or Gibson Guitars can be scheduled to appear on all pages containing the company’s name. In contrast, instead of providing a major corporation’s advertisement a network and common identity bond can be created by advertising for very small “do-it-yourself” companies creating products or releasing records related to site content. Kruse (1993) states, “The ‘do-it-yourself’ ethos of the alternative, college music environment clearly contributes to the perception that performers and audience members are virtually interchangeable” (p. 39). Apply this interchangeability a community of readers and consumers, and this uniqueness in advertising model could facilitate the sustainability of non-corporate music businesses and appeal to the subcultural identity of the “underground indie” consumer, both monetarily and in the consumption of media. In summary, applications of the Wibiya bar correspond to theories and communication types presented earlier that are briefly outlined in Table 3: *Wibiya Toolbar Applications*.

<b>Wibiya Toolbar Application</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Related Theory</b>	<b>Community Benefits</b>
<b>Chat Tools:</b> "Website Chat" open to all users, "Social Chat" for private instant messaging	Synchronous Communication	Common Identity and Common Bond	Interpersonal relationships, community involvement, exchange of cultural capital, choice of self-disclosure in participation, multiple network integration
<b>Social Network Tools:</b> "Share Menu", "Twitter Dashboard", "Facebook fan Page", "Facebook Like Button", "Smart Share"	Social Bookmarking, Social Networking	Facilitates Individual and Social Aspects of Learning, Self-Identity through exchange of social capital, (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Cultural networking, participation in social and individual aspects of learning, exchange of cultural capital and taste classifiers through participation and social distribution
<b>Audio/Visual Tools:</b> "YouTube Video Gallery", "Photo Gallery"	Display Feature, multi-media content provider	Individual aspects of learning, appeal to "Multiple Intelligences; aural/visual	Allows users to browse YouTube videos, Picasa photos and Flickr photos
<b>Display Features:</b> "Real Time Users", "iTranslation"	Display Feature	Common Identity and Common Bond, Individual aspects of learning	Displays number of user browsing the site and their geographic location, the number of most popular posts, allows users to view the community's most popular content and has potential for forming common identity with the group as a whole, translate any page into 45 different languages
"Notifier Pro"	Asynchronous Communication	Common Identity and Common Bond, Self-Identity (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Ability to target users who visit pages with certain keywords or a certain amount of total pages, multiple network integration, potential advertisement for non-corporate DIY music businesses

Table 3: *Wibiya Toolbar Applications* (Also found in Appendix E)

### Continuing Connections Off-Line with MeetUp

As mentioned earlier, by providing a space for "off-topic" discussions, users can feel free to create common bonds with other users even though the subject of discussion is not on topic. One way to provide this space is within a forum section distinctly labeled such as on Gigposters.com, which has a forum labeled, "Anything Goes." Another example is on the forum site, Gearslut.com, where there is a forum labeled, "The Moan

Zone.” Even though it seems to be off topic for the site, The Moan Zone provides a community-building forum to complain about studio sessions and includes an instructional description, “An engineer & producer self help group. Stick to audio related/recording session issues - No politics, religion, off topic stuff please!” ([www.gearslutz.com/board](http://www.gearslutz.com/board), accessed Nov 27, 2010). To further this idea of a space for “off-topic” discussions I propose the site, MeetUp.org, where users can meet face to face to have on and off-topic discussions in a physical place. This opportunity allows for users to create MeetUp groups with the tag, VinylSqueegee.com, in order for those with common identity or weak ties to strengthen those identities or ties in person. In contrast users who have already created common bonds with individual users can invite others to strengthen those bonds through a theme for the meet-up with a more specific tag such as, “VinylSqueegee.com Southeast Venue History Discussion.”

MeetUp.org is an established site whose mission statement is, “Meetup’s mission is to revitalize local community and help people around the world self-organize. MeetUp believes that people can change their personal world, or the whole world, by organizing themselves into groups that are powerful enough to make a difference.”

([www.meetup.org/about](http://www.meetup.org/about), accessed Nov 27, 2010) By changing your “personal world” you are assessing self-identity through comparison with others during MeetUps. By organizing with others to “make a difference” one must have a common identity or common bond in order to be motivated to attend or continue attending MeetUps. If Vinylsqueegee.com members use MeetUp.org as a tool for organizing they open up each meet-up to the entire member base of MeetUp.org. These members may attend based upon a common identity to the theme presented for the event, therefore possibly gaining new members and loyalty to both sites. By using MeetUp.org, Vinylsqueegee.com users

also find other potential networks based upon searchable MeetUp topics and physical proximity. The Wibiya Toolbar can be used to incorporate the details of a MeetUp.org event to all users viewing pages containing the word “vinyl”. A search for “Music” within a Nashville, TN zip code can be seen below in *Figure 3*.

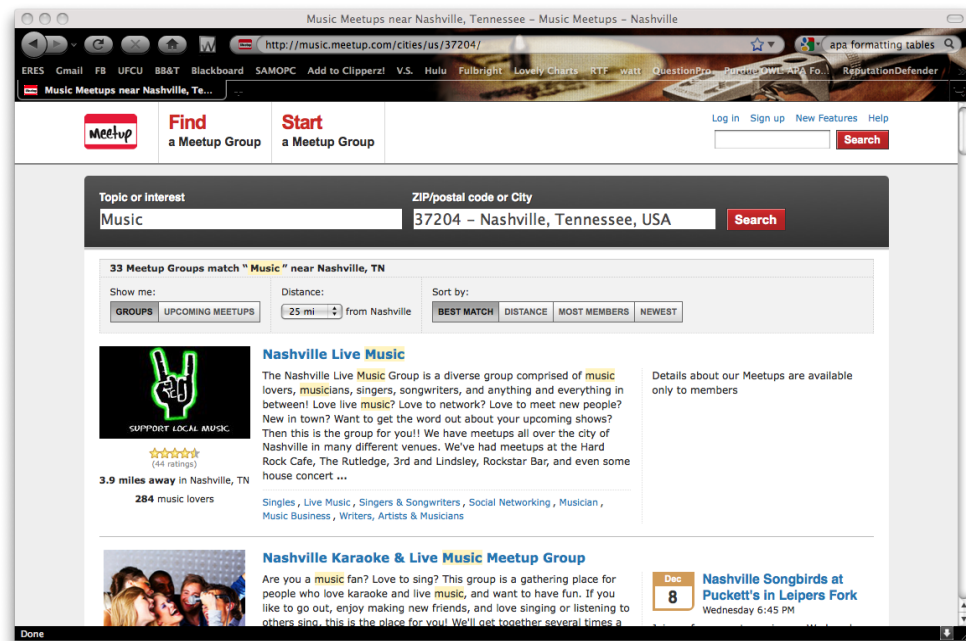
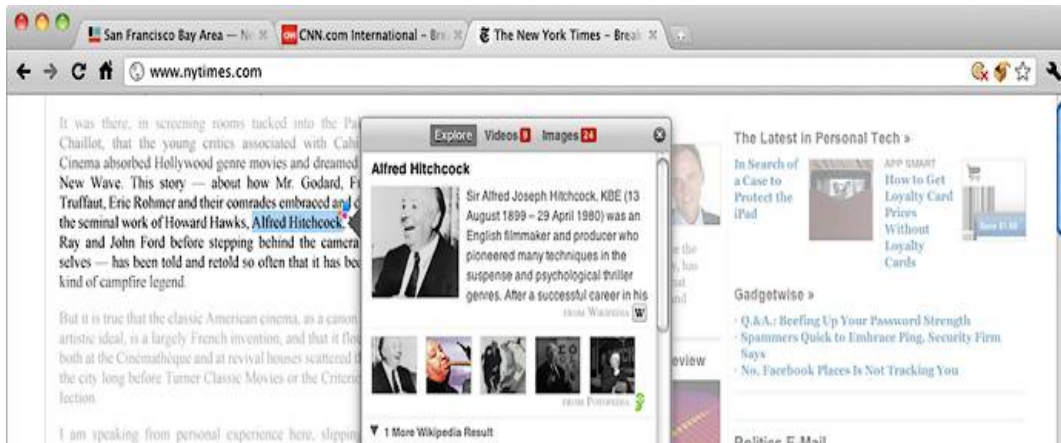


Figure 3: MeetUp.com, Music Search, <http://music.meetup.com/cities/us/37204/>, accessed Dec 2, 2010

## Encouraging Curiosity with Apture

Another alternative design idea is appealing to a community administrator in regards to the retention of visitors. Apture is a web application that allows users to explore other content while staying anchored to one site's page. The slogan on Apture's home page is, "We give readers the power to search and explore rich content and media from the web without even leaving the page." ([www.apture.com](http://www.apture.com), accessed Nov 27,

2010) The example in *Figure 4* shows text highlighted in blue and the information about that text in multi-media format presented in a separate window.



*Figure 4:* Apture, [www.apture.com](http://www.apture.com), accessed Nov 27, 2010

Apture accomplishes this empowerment through a search system that aligns any text the reader highlights with content that exists within your site and the rest of the web. The potential for information variety with this tool is exponential, but for Vinylsqueegee.com the interest is in Apture's ability to contribute to the learning aspect of the community on an individual level. Apture allows users to remain engaged in Vinylsqueegee.com's content by creating a small window with choices of other content related to the highlighted text. This window is not a new tab within the browser, or a pop-up advertisement. With this tool an individual can research terms, people, places, events, etc. that they want to know more about and then easily return to content within the same window. For example, a user is reading an article about the evolution of music recording through the technology of the phonograph and gramophone along with their respective formats, cylinders and records. The user can highlight the word

“gramophone” to learn about this technology and its inventor, Emile Berliner. Apture in this way acts as a glorified glossary for users to reference multi-media from other pages within Vinylsqueegee.com or from other sources such as a YouTube.com video of a song played from a wax cylinder. This appeals to the visual and auditory senses associated with Gardner’s “multiple intelligences,” a recognized theory in educational fields.

### **Feeding Visual Needs with Flickr**

The way the geographic visualizer can attract users to explore music events and digital archives by clicking on a point marked on the map is similar to the appeal of a Flickr photo feed. This tool would allow users to click on photos presented in a slideshow format to explore the photo and additional photos tagged or taken by other members. While the focus of Vinylsqueegee.com is a historical perspective of music culture, the Flickr photo feed would be open to all users for inclusion as long as the photos are music related. A visual example of Flickr’s layout, including a geographic tagging option, is shown in *Figure 5*.

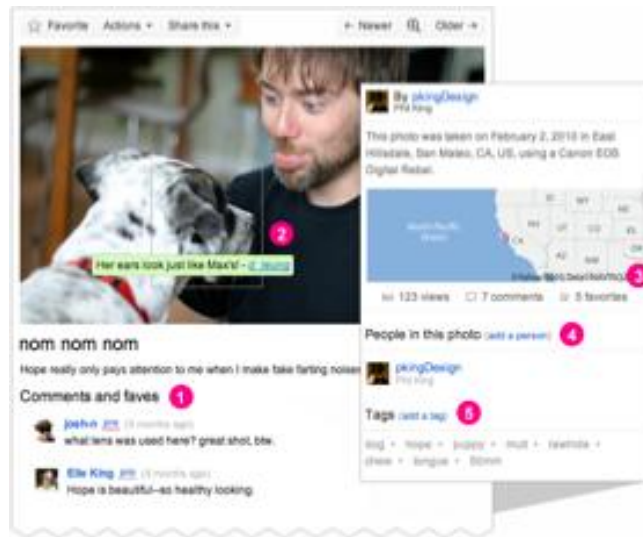


Figure 5: Flickr Feed, [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), accessed Nov 27, 2010

For example, a user may submit photos of vintage and current model amplifiers being used on-stage by modern bands and users who are interested in amplifiers might explore this specific user's collection of photos, therefore forming a common bond through a common interest in historical sound systems. Within the tags and notes attached to this specific user's photos the viewer may form a common identity with the group of users who commented on these photos of amplifiers in use. In addition to photos, tickets tubs, music merchandise, and venue architecture could be included in the site's Flickr feed. This is not only an opportunity to bring together music photographers, but also to create a point of visual exploration of photos that relate to all of music culture, not just a historical perspective. An added bonus of Flickr is the option to geographically tag the origins of the photo or the location of the subject within the photo. Table 4: *Flickr Functions*, outlines the benefits of Flickr for Vinylsqueegee.com users, as well as, the theories related to the functions that Flickr provides.

<b>Flickr Functions</b>	<b>Related Theory</b>	<b>Community Benefits</b>
Tags	Common Identity and Common Bond	Interpersonal relationships, community involvement, searchable by data, concert, band, venue, etc.
Reference Geographic origin of photo	Music as part of "Cultural Landscape"	Ability to situate oneself in relation to photo/event origin, searchable criteria
Reference Others	Common Identity and Common Bond	Cultural networking, identity formation among community
"Favorite" a photo	Common Identity and Common Bond, Self-Identity (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Reveal taste, therefore levels of identity
Add notes	Self-Identity as a Social Function of Music Psychology	Exchange cultural capital, provide details to historical event
Mobility of upload options	Music as part of "Cultural Landscape"	Upload immediately following a concert,

Table 4: *Flickr Functions*

## OTHER DESIGN IDEAS

This section briefly outlines three design ideas that are not rooted in an existing application, but in the benefits to the users. The first of these ideas is parallel to the concept of the lobby area of a movie theatre. The lobby provides a space for users to meet up with friends and make small talk with others about the films they have seen. Similarly, a "lobby" area on Vinylsqueegee.com would be a space in which users could be seen as "online" within the community for as long as they choose. During this time their presence would signify that they are open for chat and to meeting other users. As



soon as they leave the “lobby” they are no longer visible, but still able to experience site content. This appeals to the social mood of the user in the sense that they are in control of how social they would like to be on any given visit.

A second idea is analogous to a professor’s “office hours” for students. The “office hours” of Vinylsqueegee.com would be maintained by formal and informal music scholars in order to answer reader questions more directly. The process of questions submission would be through a submission form that would then be sent to a pool of ethnomusicologists who could then submit their answer(s) for all to see. The value of including scholars from institutions and “scholars” or popular music fans is that either scholar will have information that aligns or differs, but provides a variety of information. For example, an institutional scholar may answer a question regarding the popular culture studies of MTV as a commercial network, while a museum staff member might provide a link to an exhibit chronicling the history of MTV’s set designs, and the extreme music fan/”scholar” may provide a list of promotional items they have collected of limited edition artifacts with descriptions of each event or artist these artifacts correspond with. In this way, “office hours” provide another opportunity to create and exchange cultural capital and can create discussion among users when information is collectively agreed upon or disputed.

The third design idea appeals to the individual by providing a daily sign-on question or reader’s poll. For example, when signing on a user is asked, “Do you still own vinyl records?” This then could be tabulated in a simple graphic display of “yes” and “no”, without any individually identifying information attached to each user. Users can see how their answers compare to other, as well as, form a common identity with the

group who answered similarly. Questions could be changed daily or weekly and results could be archived by date for readers to see results at their convenience.

## **VISUAL CASE STUDIES**

There is a need for a competitive analysis of similar sites. I have done a brief environmental scan of related sites and the benefits of their major functions and tools. Final design decisions for Vinylsqueegee.com will be based upon the results of a detailed competitive analysis and then evaluated during a period of Beta testing. The sites visually represented below are sites that encompass one or more of my intended user groups and make use of tools that have similar correlations to theories present throughout this report. While these sites have similar characteristics, none of them encompass the user groups, format, and functions that Vinylsqueegee.com intends to combine. These sites are as follows: 1) Gigposters.com, 2) Last.fm, and 3) Allmusic.com. Each site's functions and related theories are represented in a table. Common features of each site and Vinylsqueegee.com are noted by a bolded "x."

### **Gigposters.com**

Gigposters.com is a website designed for the digital display of "gigposters," also known as, live music concert posters. Optional membership profile pages include specific information through which opportunities for self-disclosure are made available. The basic options include; biography, location, interests, occupation, and instant messenger options for contacting the user. I chose to disclose in my profile that I am attending the University of Texas Austin and that, "I study Gigposters and their impact on

music culture” (<http://www.gigposters.com/forums/members/shesmellow.html>, accessed Dec 1, 2010). A forum section serves as the public discussion area. In this area there are forums titled to specific interests of the community including categories such as: “general discussion”, “technique”, “other”, and “premium members private forum.” (<http://www.gigposters.com/forums/forum.php>, accessed Dec 1, 2010) Gigposters.com is a self-governing site in many ways. Moderators who are prominent members in the off-line screen-printing world help to shape discussions and remove inappropriate content. This site serves as an online archive of past and present posters that members can comment on or even purchase directly from the designer. In a traditional blog website a new article or post is the first focus for visitors. On the homepage Gigposters.com displays the most current posters uploaded, “Top Favorites”, and classified advertisements for posters. This appeals to the visual intelligence and is an opportunity for exploration and self-identity formation. The posters on the homepage do not have designer’s names attached, but simply display the poster, which may have recognizable bands names as part of the design. Users can click on a poster based upon visual aesthetic or action to investigate further can be triggered by a band name or venue within the poster design. From this point a user can comment, Facebook “like”, add to their favorites, copy code for embedding into forums or websites, and identify the designer, band, or venue. A screenshot is shown below in *Figure 6: Leia Bell, Apollo Sunshine*.

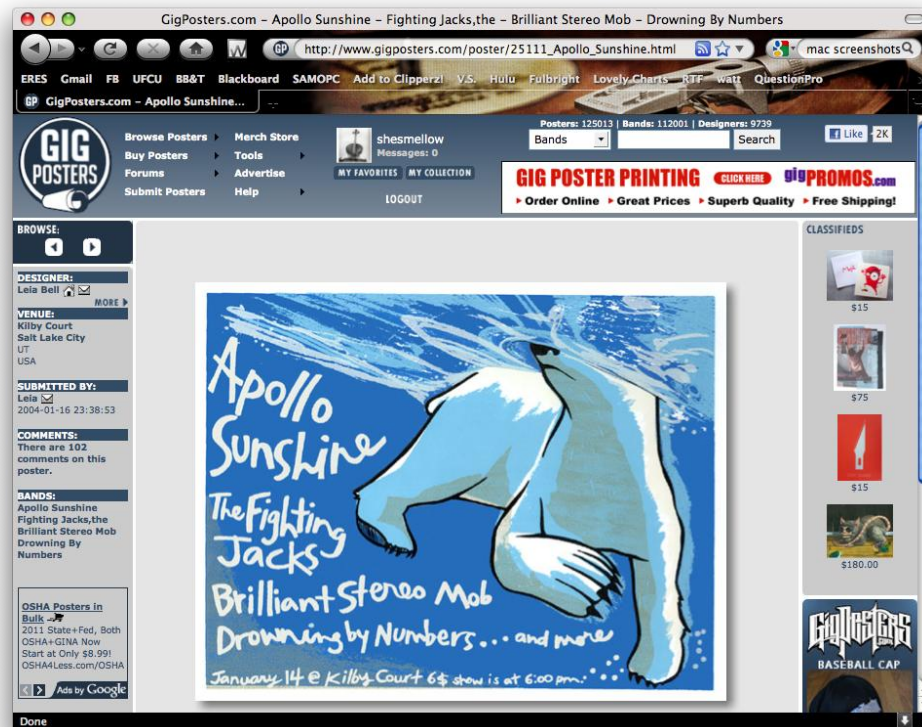


Figure 6: Leia Bell, Apollo Sunshine,  
[http://www.gigposters.com/poster/25111\\_Apollo\\_Sunshine.html](http://www.gigposters.com/poster/25111_Apollo_Sunshine.html),  
 accessed Dec 1, 2010

On the far left column of the page shown in *Figure 6*, there is a section for comments about this poster. The comments are not shown under each poster displayed, which is convenient for space but comments can become buried within the site. For Vinylsqueegee.com I propose a format similar to a radial mind-map that can accommodate comments and a series of user choices. A basic visual example of the choices provided for a hypothetical discussion of an interview with “rockabilly” guitarist, Rosie Flores, is shown in *Figure 7*.

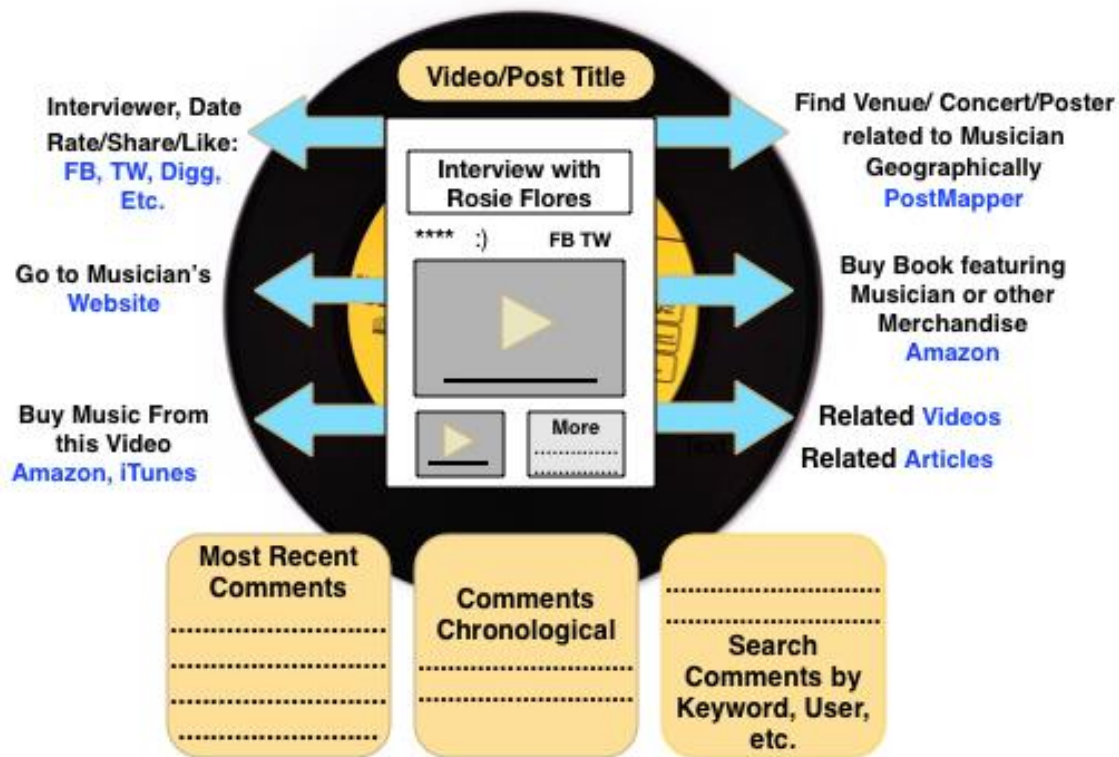


Figure 7: Vinylsqueegee.com Radial Discussion Display, (Also found in Appendix C,a)

As with many blogs and websites choices are presented in a linear format or through submenu selections. The users of Vinylsqueegee.com can see their basic choices for action in one window and their next actions will be revealed in a separate window, so as to easily return to the previous page. Other examples of Vinylsqueegee.com's content display design for articles and poster discussions can be found in Appendix C.

Gigposters.com has many features that correlate to the theories presented in this report. A similar aspect of Gigposters.com and Vinylsqueegee.com is that some content

is curated. Posters displayed on Gigposters.com must pass a submission process in order to maintain the quality and purpose of the site and to eliminate inappropriate images from spammers. As mentioned previously, there is a need to further research this site. Though I do not consider the focus of Gigposters.com as a competitor to Vinylsqueegee.com, I would like to find more ways to connect both community members through links, guest writers, and mutual advertisement opportunities. Below in *Table 5: Gigposters.com Comparison*, a bolded “x,” denotes similarities between design aspects and functions of Gigposters.com compared with Vinylsqueegee.com’s intended design choices.

<b>Gigposters.com</b>	<b>Optional Profile Pages</b>	<b>Chat Options</b>	<b>Forums</b>	<b>Private Messaging</b>	<b>Facebook Like Button</b>
<b>Synchronous Communication</b>		<b>x</b>			
<b>Asynchronous Communication</b>			<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Common Identity</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>
<b>Common Bond</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>	
<b>Self-Identity</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Exchange of Cultural Capital</b>		<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Social Bookmarking</b>					<b>x</b>

Table 5: *Gigposters.com Comparison*

## **Last.fm**

Last.fm is a website that focuses on the actual audio files of music through recommendations, creation of personal radio stations, and visual statistics of music information such as top tracks/albums among users. Users can join or form groups

based upon similar tastes, listen to the same play-list through a group radio station and find other listeners who share their fandom. Users can also purchase any song or all songs from a play-list through Amazon.com. This site is truly a multi-media musical playground with links to videos, events, social bookmark tools, and even “journals” that users can post regarding their own ideas for a play-list or reasons why they enjoy a certain band’s music. This site also has the potential for information to get buried under all the features it has to offer. For example, if one wanted to view more historical perspective of the band, Television, basic information is available through Last.fm, but no formal articles or a geographic representation of concerts this band has performed throughout their career. This is because the focus of Last.fm is to promote music listening. From this listening the social functions of music, as defined by Hargreaves and North, are fulfilled.

Last.fm is possibly the largest and most detailed site with a focus of providing the actual media of music besides the social music site of Apple iTunes, Ping. There are learning opportunities through Last.fm, but no formal articles filtered by site editors. This is one area where Vinylsqueegee.com differs. In *Figure 8*, Last.fm Sign-In Homepage, a basic outline of the site is visible, including a non-music related advertisement for the sandwich company, Jimmy Johns.

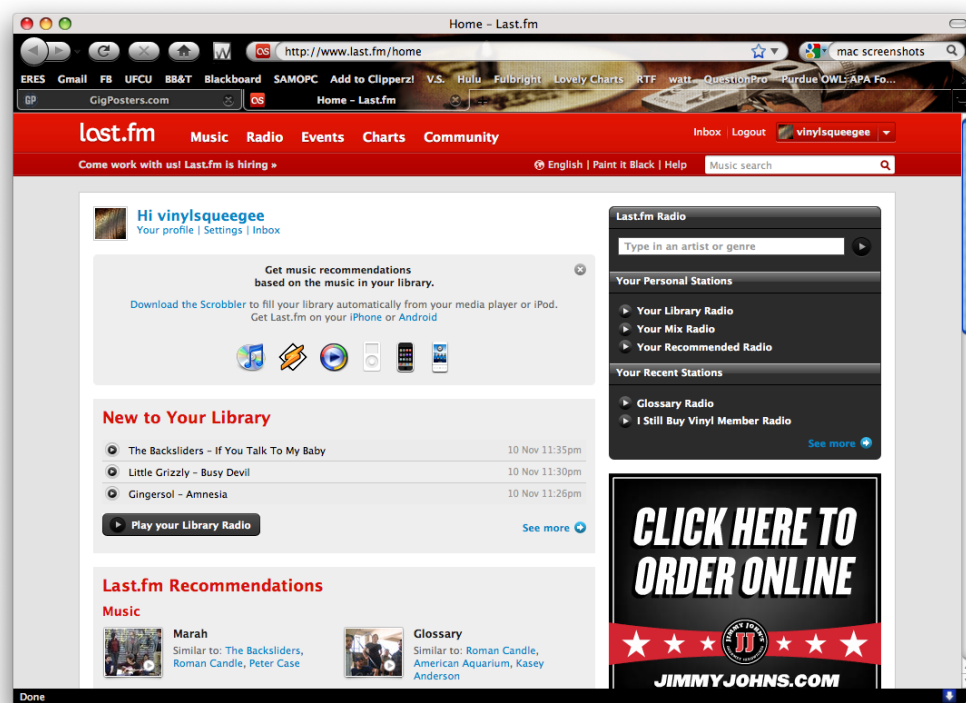


Figure 8: Last.fm Sign-In Homepage, <http://www.last.fm/home>, accessed Dec 1, 2010

The inclusion of non-music related advertisements is a choice that may bring exponential profits a site, but is no interest to me as an administrator and designer, and may be of no interest to potential users. With the customization of the Wibiya Toolbar's application, "Notifier Pro," advertisements can be targeted to users who visit pages with specific keywords. This allows for much smaller music businesses to target users who may be more interested in their products than the entire community of members. A simple example of this feature would be for users who have read all of Professor X's articles to have an advertisement shown to them for Professor X's book on "music's effect on brain wave functions." Though Professor X may not write about topics related



to the articles he or she may write for the Vinylsqueegee.com community, readers may seek out more work from this professor because they enjoy his or her style and perspective or have attended shows that Professor X has marked on the geographic visualizer. This common bond between user and Professor X helps users connect with an institutional professor, which they may not have access to otherwise, through the various aspects of music culture.

Last.fm has many opportunities to join groups related to musical taste the site does not provide for synchronous private chat. It allows for comments made on an individual's profile through a "shoutbox," for all to see. One can form common bonds with individual users through viewing their recent activity that includes their track additions, new friends, library, radio station, etc. It seems the only way to have a discussion with an individual user is through the "shoutbox" or to actually know the user "off-line."

Vinylsqueegee.com will provide synchronous chat options and a possible "lobby," as described in the section titled, "Other Design Ideas." Below in Table 6: *Last.fm Comparison*, the site's defining features are outlined. As mentioned before, note the lack of synchronous communication tools such as chat options. Areas Vinylsqueegee.com intends to fulfill are identified by a green "x."

Last.fm	Optional Profile Pages	Chat Options	Forums	Private Messaging	Facebook/ Share Buttons
Synchronous Communication	x	x	x		
Asynchronous Communication			x		
Common Identity	x		x		x
Common Bond	x		x		
Self-Identity	x	x	x		x
Exchange of Cultural Capital			x		
Social Bookmarking					x

Table 6: *Last.fm Comparison*

### Allmusic.com

Allmusic.com is a site dedicated to the detailing of every music genre, album, band member, etc. that is possible to document. This site does so through broad categories such as, pop, rock, classical, etc. This could be problematic as some bands are hard to classify and are labeled with different taxonomies and folksonomies.

The site has a blog whose topics vary in historical and modern perspectives. However when trying to identify the author by clicking on the author's name, the author's other articles are brought up, but no identifying information about the person.

Vinylsqueegee.com would at least direct the user to a link to an author's website or profile information. If the author had no profile information none would be available in the pop up window. With Allmusic.com's blog, I wanted to see if these authors were institutional scholars, if they had authored books about certain music-related subjects, or where I might find a way to identify them further. The blog allows for comments, but

many spam comments were visible that were of no relation to the content of the article. This could be curbed with moderators or the requirement of membership, which is not currently required.

The site's music database has opportunities to purchase records by specific bands and an opportunity to make a correction to the band's entry within the database, but there is no opportunity to discuss the band's music with others. An example of the basic layout of Allmusic.com's database can be found in *Figure 9*.

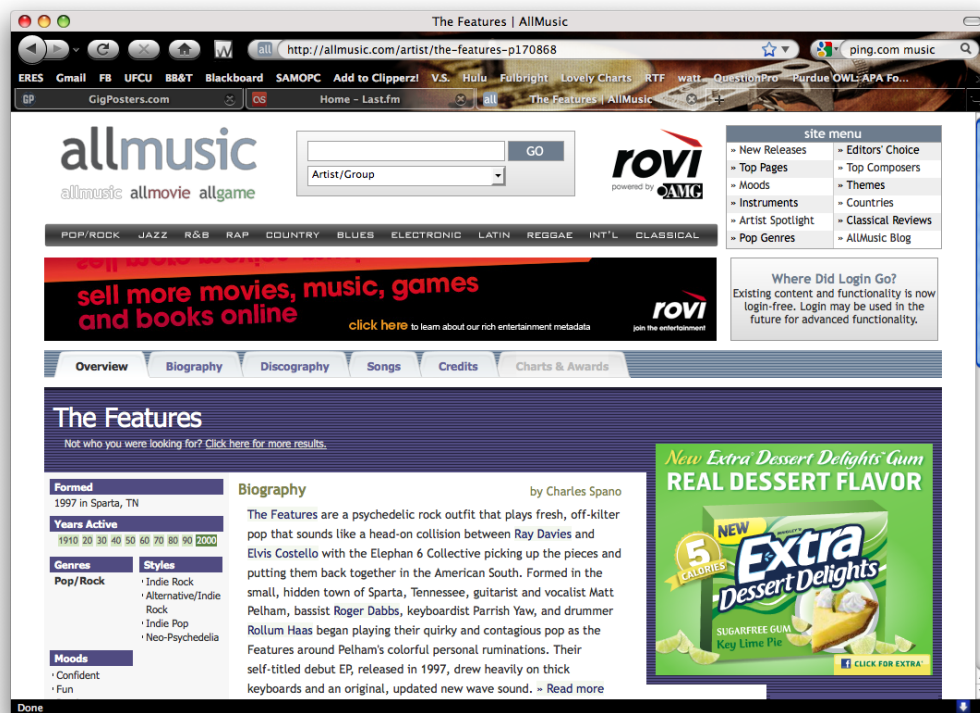
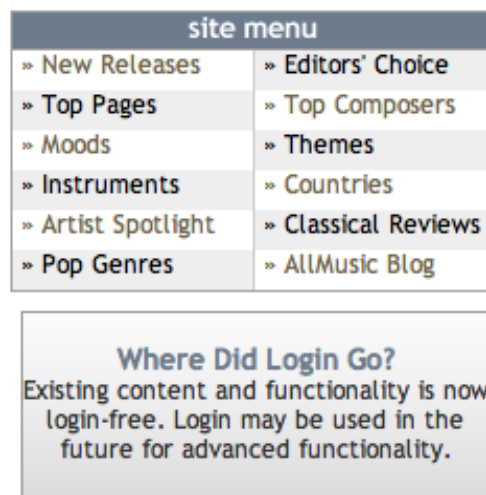


Figure 9: Allmusic.com, The Features, <http://allmusic.com/artist/the-features-p170868>, accessed Dec 1, 2010

As examined earlier within Last.fm, this site also includes non-music related advertisements. It also has many sub-menus to accommodate the mass of information within its database. Visually, this site is the most busy and hardest to navigate. It is interesting that the site has a note on the top right-hand corner regarding the lack of sign-on requirements. It could be that requiring a sign-on decreased traffic and therefore decreased advertisement revenues. This is something that Vinylsqueegee.com will have to consider for sustainability and traffic statistics. *Figure 10: Allmusic.com, Login Note* shows the information provided about the disappearance of a login requirement.



*Figure 10: Allmusic.com, Login Note, <http://allmusic.com/>, Accessed Dec 1, 2010*

In summation, Allmusic.com has an extensive database that provides for the individual aspects of learning and self-identity. The site, however, does not allow a space for the exchange of cultural capital through comments or forums within the database.

In Table 7 the site's features are outlined in comparison to Vinylsqueegee.com. The green "x" denotes the features Vinylsqueegee.com intends to fulfill.

Allmusic.com	Optional Profile Pages	Chat Options	Forums	Private Messaging	Facebook and Share Buttons
Synchronous Communication	x	x	x		
Asynchronous Communication			x		
Common Identity	x		x		x
Common Bond	x	x	x		
Self-Identity	x	x	x		x
Exchange of Cultural Capital			x		
Social Bookmarking					x

Table 7: Allmusic.com Comparison

In conclusion, these three music sites perform specific functions and users are potentially from various groups. Further research would include finding the number of total members, site traffic, and examining each site's business model. Gigposters.com is the site that most closely resembles Vinylsqueegee.com's layout and navigation. With Last.fm's concentration on the listening of music and Allmusic.com's concentration on the details of genres and specific bands it would be advantageous to provide links to these sites in order to direct users to established sites and databases. Gigposters.com can only enhance Vinylsqueegee.com experience because it is the only comprehensive database of concert posters besides Wolfgang's Vault, whose sole focus in displaying posters is for the user to purchase the poster. Vinylsqueegee.com does not seek to

“reinvent the wheel” of music sites that exist, but to create a very specialized community who seek a deeper conversation about music culture through a historical perspective.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

During this process of design and research there have been theoretical and conceptual tangents explored in levels of detail that are not included in this compact report. There are several theories that could be applied to the design of this community that relate to the concept of community, to social theory, and to learning.

The first of these theories is Wenger’s idea of a “community of practice.” A “community of practice (CoP),” according to Wenger, is a group of people who share similar problems, are collectively passionate, concerned, and in order to gain or deepen knowledge and increase expertise, interact on a regular basis (Wenger, 2002, p. 4). Wenger provides three elements of the structure of a CoP that can be directly related to theories and concepts presented earlier. The first of these three elements is the *domain*, which “creates a common ground and a sense of common identity” (Wenger, 2002, p. 27). The *domain* of Vinylsqueegee.com can mean different things such as, the domain of music experience as a way to connect to others, or the virtual domain of the community’s “space” online. The *community* “fosters interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust...Community is an important element because learning is a matter of belonging as well as an intellectual process, involving the heart as well as the head.” (Wenger, 2002, p. 28-29)

The second structural element involves the bond theories presented earlier and references the importance of social learning. The third element is the *practice*, which

Wenger describes as, “a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories, and documents that members share” (Wenger, 2002, p. 29). An example of a design tool for Vinylsqueegee.com is my proposed “map of collective concert history.” After users have developed the initial contributions to the map tool, future users will look to past contributions for language use, and documents such as concert ticket images and posters as acceptable documents for the community’s domain. Wenger presents seven principles that can be used to cultivate a CoP. Some of these principles can be directly correlated with the site design process such as, 1) “Design for evolution”, 3) “Invite different levels of participation”, 5) “Focus on value”, and 7) “Create a rhythm for the community” (Wenger, 2002, p. 51). Table 8: *Wenger Design Choices*, outlines these basic correlations with my design choices.

Wenger's Principle: "Cultivating a CoP"	Design Tool	Community Benefits
1) "Design for Evolution"	WordPress & BuddyPress Technical Platform, Customizable Plug-Ins	Adaptable to needs assessed through site feedback and suggestion forms
3) "Invite Different Levels of Participation"	Login & PW, Limited content available to non- members, Chat tools, Forums, Volunteer moderator positions, Article submission button, MeetUp.org button, Social bookmarking tools	Varying levels of commitment from members, Synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, ways to exchange cultural capital, user opportunity to provide site content, participation "off-line" with MeetUp.org, ability to share content through social bookmarking
5) "Focus on Value"	Curated content, moderated forums, Volunteer moderator positions	Reliability and trust of information provided within the community, expectations of routine with released content
7) "Create a Rhythm"	Scheduled publishing of content, notification through RSS Feed, Sign- On question/ music trivia	Reliability of published content, helps cultivate committed users/ participants

Table 8: *Wenger Design Choices*

Another area of interest is to explore concepts such as "social loafing" in relation to user participation. The work inspiring the need to further investigate these concepts is titled, "Using Social Psychology to Motivate Contributions to Online Communities" (Beenen, et. al., 2004). In this study researchers sought to prove that users would contribute more ratings to a movie rating site if, "the uniqueness of their contributions is made salient" (Beenan, et. al., 2004, p. 214). This is an interesting finding and is



important to consider when user-generated content is needed to maintain and build a community of practice.

A third area of interest is focused on learning theory and processes. While this community is not intended to be an online classroom, the design of the community is influenced by an interest in arts education. Some of the areas that can be applied to the design of Vinylsqueegee.com are social and individual learning theories and works relating user interface with Gardner's theory of "Multiple Intelligences." Most specifically, the work of Salomon and Perkins (1998) in their article titled, "Individual and Social Aspects of Learning," where they explore "participatory knowledge construction" (p. 9) as a process that is socially mediated. They further state that, "Knowledge, rather than being transmitted or internalized, becomes jointly constructed ("appropriated") in the sense that it is neither handed down ready-made nor constructed by individuals on their own" (Salomon & Perkins, 1998, p. 9). This concept is especially directed towards the benefits of targeting institutional scholars and music enthusiasts as both groups who have knowledge to offer and their contributions combined create a knowledge base available to all users in the form of comments, article submissions, and the choice to use chat tools.

### **SURVEY AND BETA TESTING**

After further theoretical research is conducted a survey has been proposed as a needs assessment tool for the formative design of Vinylsqueegee.com. A needs assessment survey will be refined and operationalized in the planning stage.

Based on research results, survey questions are designed to address basic needs of users such as types of media preferred, discussion tools/chat tools preferred, and subject matters of interest related to music. The proposed survey questions and format can be found in Appendix A. A convenience sample will be recruited through the list-servs, forums, and social network channels of the following organizations and music communities: International Society for Music Education; International Society for Music Information Retrieval; Society for Music Perception and Cognition; Postcardfromhell.com, gigposters.com, and my personal Facebook account.

The survey sample consists of potential users who are interested in different aspects of music and representative of the groups I wish to join together in this community; music enthusiasts, musicians, music industry professionals, music scholars, and institutional staff. In addition, respondents will be asked to refer friends through a rolling or snowball sample method.

## **METHODS**

Survey respondents will be recruited through email to specific list-serv administrators and website administrators to grant permission to post the survey link to the list-serv or to their website forum section. A request email will be posted to the list-serv or forum thread with a link to the online survey upon permission from the list-serv or website administrator. An example of the proposed email can be found in Appendix B.

The survey will be hosted by the online software service, located on [www.QuestionPro.com](http://www.QuestionPro.com), at a cost of \$15 per month for students. This program allows for

exportable results, real-time tracking, and other features that are of value to the study. The results are blind, confidential, and are only available to the researcher. Identifying information of participants is voluntary and all research will be conducted according to strict adherence to permissions and ethical considerations for research with human subjects. The results will be tabulated by frequency and mean and archived for comparison with future studies of Vinylsqueegee.com.

The last question of the survey asks for the participant to provide their email if they would like to be contacted about the launch of Vinylsqueegee.com. Those who provide their email address will form a second sample group that will be solicited for future participation in Beta testing. During Beta testing users will be asked to assess satisfaction with features and functions as the site design progresses with periodic follow-up surveys. These surveys will be used to improve site design, maintain quality of content, and retain users.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the process of designing VinylSqueegee.com is one of detailed consideration of social theories, user groups, and current Internet applications. Tools such as instant messaging through chat programs create a channel of synchronous communication and allow for the formation of common bonds and interpersonal relationships. Forum and comment areas allow for the formation of common identity and the exchange of cultural capital, while also contributing to aspects of individual and social learning.

By investigating these theories and researching current web applications, the creation of Vinylsqueegee.com includes design choices that correlate to human social behaviors found online and off-line. With music culture and experience as a conduit to self-expression and self-identity, users find affinity groups within the cultural landscape of music. Alternative site features and functions with a clear focus on an historical perspective will make Vinylsqueegee.com a unique music community.

## Appendix A

### APPENDIX A: PROPOSED NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR VINYLSCQUEEGEE.COM MUSIC COMMUNITY

Are you affiliated with any of the following groups? (Please check all that apply):

1. General music enthusiast
2. Music industry professional
3. Undergraduate student
4. Graduate student
5. Professor
6. Musician
7. Graphic artist or poster artist
8. Museum or library staff
9. Music interest organization member or officer
10. Other

--

Your age?

1. 18-24
2. 25-35
3. 36-45
4. 46-55
5. 55 & up

Your gender?

1. Female
2. Male

How often do you use music-related websites for work?

1. Never
2. 1-5 times per day
3. 6-10 times per day
4. 10+ times per day

How often do you use music-related websites for leisure?

1. Never
2. 1-5 times per day
3. 6-10 times per day
4. 10+ times per day

What current social networks, websites, or list-servs do you use to discuss music-related topics? (Please check all that apply):

1. Facebook
2. Postcardfromhell.com
3. Gigposters.com
4. IASPM Forum (The International Association for the Study of Popular Music)
5. YouTube, Vimeo, Blip
6. ISMIR Listserv (The International Society for Music Information Retrieval)
7. Amazon.com
8. Sonneck-Digest Listserv (The Society for American Music)
9. Flickr
10. IRCAM Listserv (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique)
11. Other

--

How often do you use social networks to discuss music-related topics?

1. Never
2. A few times a month
3. A few times a year
4. 1-5 times per day
5. 6-10 times per day
6. 10+ times per day

Would you use a database containing scholarly material for any of the following purposes? (Please check all that apply):

I would not use this database	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music journals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music websites	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music wikis	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which music media interests you? (Please check all that apply):

1. The physics of sound
2. The history of instruments
3. Music cognition & perception
4. Music Therapy
5. Music archives & exhibits
6. Ethnomusicology/Musicology
7. Recording formats
8. Music conferences
9. Fashion in music
10. Tax preparation for artists & musicians
11. Health-related content specific to artists & musicians

12. Music-related festivals & events
13. Music interest groups, associations, & non-profits
14. Instructional videos, podcasts, & printable PDFs
15. Music Posters/Gigposters/Concert Posters
16. Touring and booking information
17. Music industry
18. Hearing protection & devices
19. Venue profiles & history
20. Independent label profiles & history
21. Vinyl records & album art
22. Other

I am most likely to view content presented in the following format(s):

1. Video (Short)
2. Video (Extended)
3. Audio Podcast Interview (Short)
4. Audio Podcast Interview (Extended)
5. Articles (Short)
6. Articles (Extended)
7. Other

How often do you use subscribed RSS Feed(s)?

1. I do not subscribe to RSS Feeds
2. A few times a month
3. A few times a year
4. 1-5 times per day
5. 6-10 times per day
6. 10 + times per day
7. I have too many RSS feeds and don't read them.

What method(s) do you use to share online content with others? (Please check all that apply):

1. Email
2. Facebook
3. Twitter
4. Word of mouth
5. I Instant Message (IM)
6. I text message via cell phone
7. Other

Do you comment on web content? (Please check all that apply):

1. I do not comment on web content

2. I sometimes comment
3. I frequently comment
4. I sometimes comment via a social networking site
5. I frequently comment via a social networking site
6. I like website content shared by my Facebook friends
7. Other

---

Which bookmarking site(s) do you use? (Please check all that apply):

1. LibraryThing
2. GoodReads
3. Browser Bookmarking
4. GoogleReader
5. Digg
6. Delicious
7. Other

---

I would participate in the following discussion tools, (Please rank in order of likeliness to use with 1 being most likely and 5 being not likely):

- 1 An instant messenger group chat \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 A casual face to face meet up at a local coffee shop or meeting space \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 A MeetUp.org meet-up event \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 A Skype discussion \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 A forum \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Another method not listed \_\_\_\_\_

How do you find out about local music events and exhibits? (Please check all that apply):

1. A specific local site for music or arts events
2. A general site dedicated to national music or arts events
3. I ask someone I know for this information
4. I post my search via a social networking site such as Facebook
5. I do not search online for this information
6. Other

---

Please provide your email if you interested in contributing content or learning more about VinylSqueegee.com's future launch.

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Please provide any additional comments or suggestions here:

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1. Thank you for your participation.

## **Appendix B**

### **APPENDIX B: REQUEST EMAIL FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

Dear Music Enthusiast, Scholar, or Musician:

I am media studies student in the Radio-Television-Film Department at The University of Texas at Austin.

Vinyl Squeegee is an online resource for music scholars, students, and anyone interested in the study of music history, culture, and science.

This website will include content in the form of -articles, videos, & podcasts

- Museum collections

- Profiles of music organizations, associations, & non-profits

- Academic reports, theses, & dissertations

- Music library collections & archives

- Music-related conferences

- Music festivals & events

- Out-of-print publications

Please support my research about online music communities by taking this short survey.

All results are anonymous and confidential.

<<http://vinylsqueegee.questionpro.com>>

Thank you,

Anna Fitzgerald

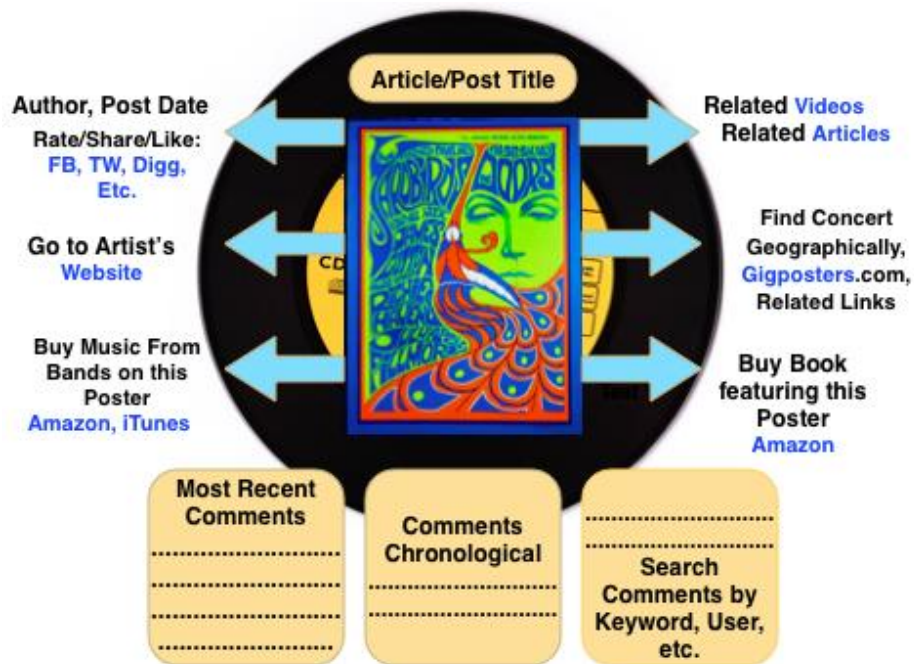
Founder and Developer, Vinyl Squeegee

Graduate Student, UT-Austin, Department of Radio-Television-Film

## Appendix C

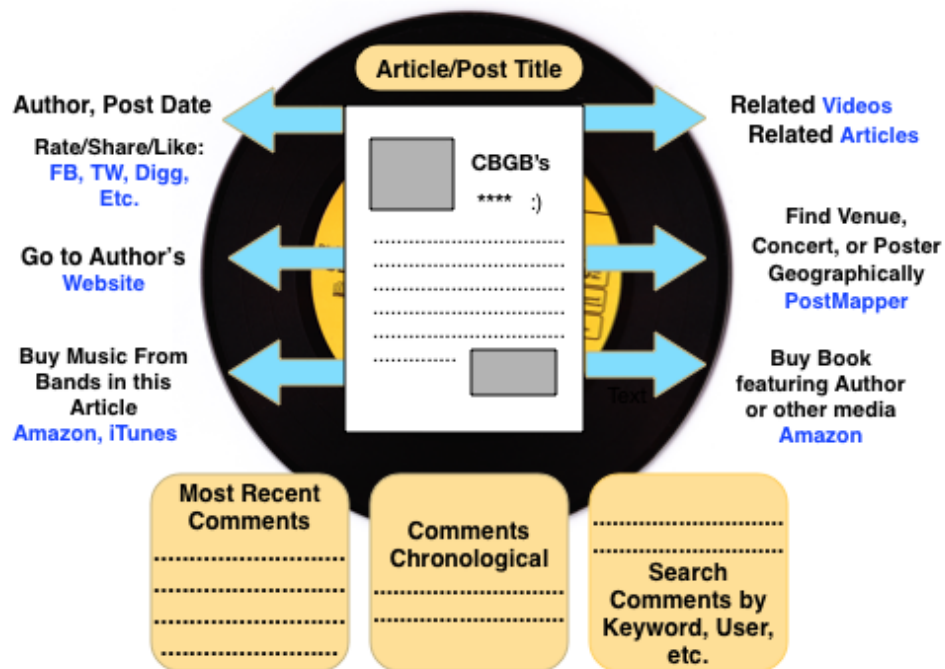
### APPENDIX C: VINYLSQUEEGEE.COM CONTENT DISPLAY EXAMPLES

#### a) Vinylsqueegiee.com Bonnie Maclean Poster Discussion Example

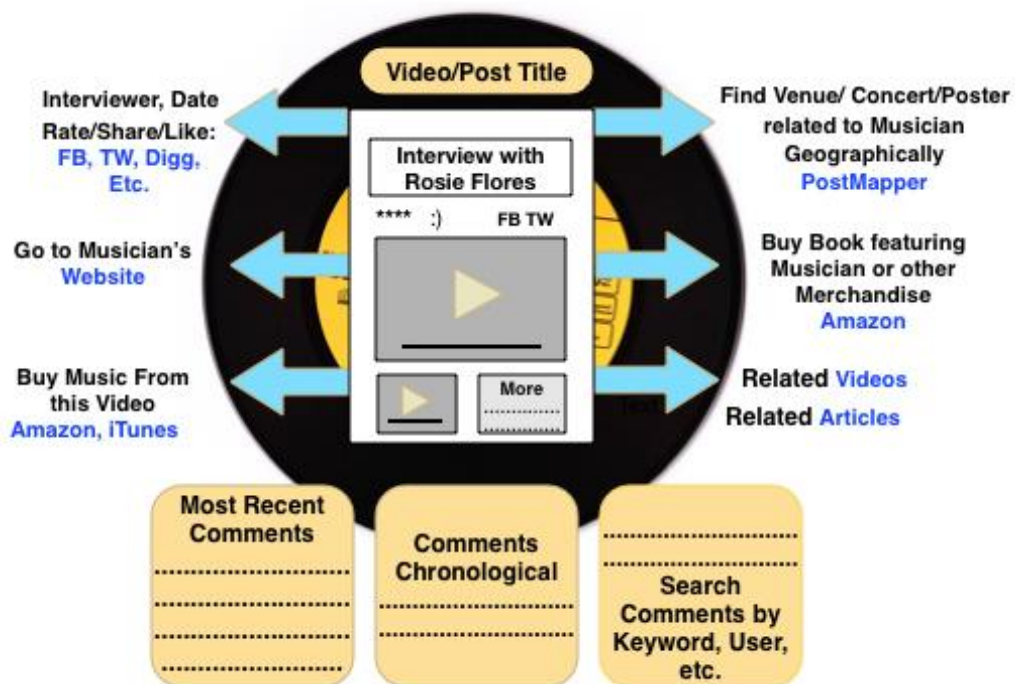


Poster by Bonnie Maclean, <http://www.bonniemaclean.com/posters/posters.html>, accessed Dec 1, 2010.

#### b) Vinylsqueegiee.com Article Display Example (Next Page)

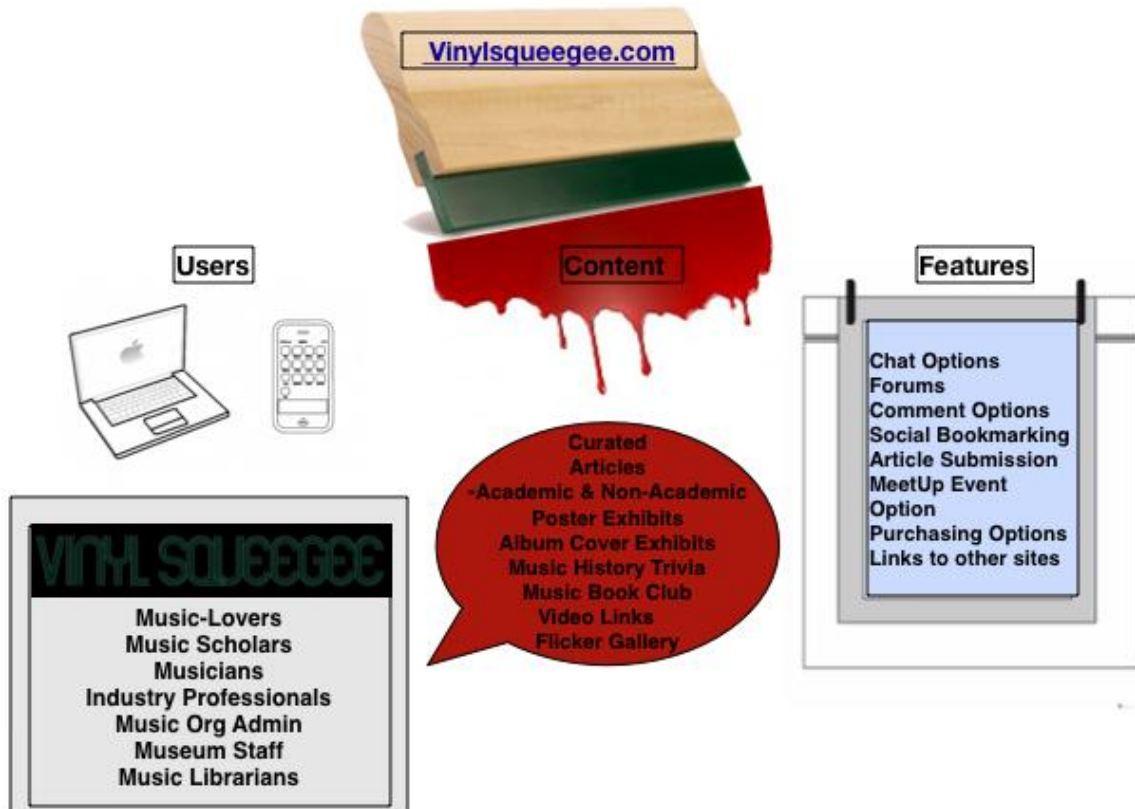


c) Vinylsqueegee.com Radial Discussion Display



## Appendix D

### APPENDIX D: VINYLSCQUEEGEE.COM USERS, CONTENT, AND FEATURES



## Appendix E

**APPENDIX E: TABLE 3: *WIBIYA TOOLBAR APPLICATIONS* (EXTENDED VIEW)**

Wibiya Toolbar Applications	Category	Related Theory	Community Benefits
<b>Chat Tools:</b> "Website Chat" open to all users, "Social Chat" for private instant messaging	Synchronous Communication	Common Identity and Common Bond	Interpersonal relationships, community involvement, exchange of cultural capital, choice of self-disclosure in participation, multiple network integration
<b>Social Network Tools:</b> "Share Menu", "Twitter Dashboard", "Facebook fan Page", "Facebook Like Button", "Smart Share"	Social Bookmarking, Social Networking	Facilitates Individual and Social Aspects of Learning, Self-Identity through exchange of social capital, (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Cultural networking, participation in social and individual aspects of learning, exchange of cultural capital and taste classifiers through participation and social distribution
<b>Audio/Visual Tools:</b> "YouTube Video Gallery", "Photo Gallery"	Display Feature, multi-media content provider	Individual aspects of learning, appeal to "Multiple Intelligences; aural/visual	Allows users to browse YouTube videos, Picasa photos and Flickr photos
<b>Display Features:</b> "Real Time Users", "iTranslation"	Display Feature	Common Identity and Common Bond, Individual aspects of learning	Displays number of user browsing the site and their geographic location, the number of most popular posts, allows users to view the community's most popular content and has potential for forming common identity with the group as a whole, translate any page into 45 different languages
"Notifier Pro"	Asynchronous Communication	Common Identity and Common Bond, Self-Identity (Social Functions of Music Psychology)	Ability to target users who visit pages with certain keywords or a certain amount of total pages, multiple network integration, potential advertisement for non-corporate DIY music businesses

## Resources

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